

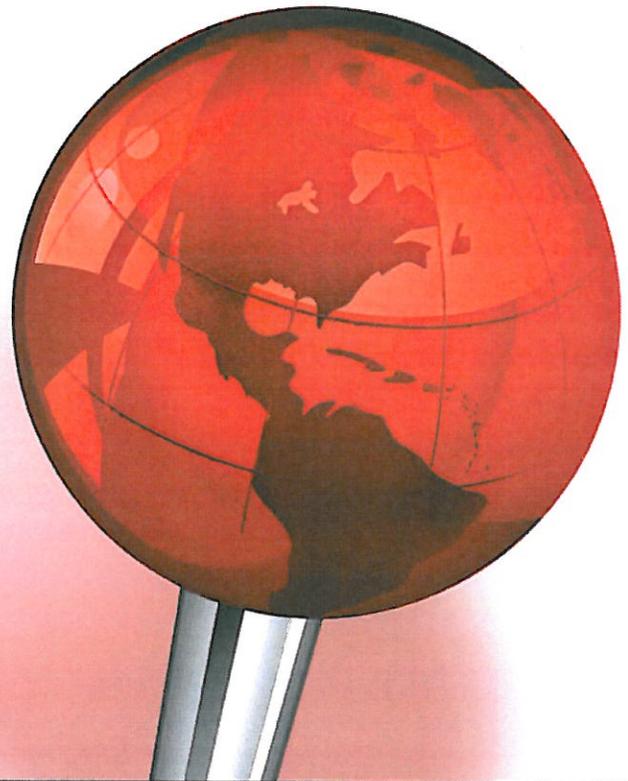
DELIVERABLES
for the
**Review of the City of Marshall Texas
Tourism Plan**

- 1. Findings**
- 2. Assessment of 53 Original
Recommendations**
- 3. Conclusion & Recommendations**

December 19, 2013



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FINDINGS – Marshall Texas Entertainment Arts Brand Review

Introduction

Great Destination Strategies, LLC was retained by the City of Marshall, Texas to review its 2007 Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan, prepared by Destination Development, Inc. The City asked GDS to interview stakeholders and City officials, review the activities of tourism-related organizations within the City, inspect the physical changes to the downtown, and to look the specifics of the Hotel Occupancy Funds, the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau, Wonderland of Lights Festival and the merits of Boogie Woogie Music as a lure for Marshall. The City also asked GDS to comment on the relevancy of the original 53 DDI Plan Recommendations.

GDS has concluded its investigative phase of the Review. John Kelsh, Principal of GDS conducted 23 in-person interviews and 13 telephone interviews during the course of his investigation (see Appendix A). Mr. Kelsh also reviewed thirty-four documents related to tourism development and promotion in Marshall, Texas, and explored downtown Marshall, Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Josey Ranch and many other tourism related venues in and around Marshall (see Appendices B and C).

Findings

DDI's Plan recommended that Marshall pursue a brand of Entertainment Arts.

Entertainment Arts promotes and develops art that is both entertaining and educational. This includes artists in action: potters, painters, chalk artists, sculptures, chainsaw carvers, glass artisans, etc. It also includes performing arts: theater in the round, mimes, comedy, acrobatic arts, and most importantly, music. And finally, it includes culinary, and participatory art – where people participate in the experience, whether glass blowing or a role in a murder mystery. In all of these forms, the idea is to entertain and educate, and to do so in a number of indoor and outdoor venues

The brand will revolve around creating eight to ten performance venues in downtown Marshall, then staging all types of activities, eventually on a year round basis. These activities will not only include the arts, but will also include movies and film, arts & crafts fairs, open-air and farmers' markets, all of which will make downtown Marshall a hub of activity - where there is always something going on.

DDI's Plan to develop a robust and continuous offering of entertainment within the downtown corridor of Marshall was a tall order. Finding artists who would be willing and able to provide a continuity of professional and attractive events is not an easy thing. It was unknown whether a sufficient number of visitors would be lured to Marshall by these entertainers to generate the incomes needed to sustain themselves. As DDI pointed out, to attempt this type of brand development, the stakeholders of Marshall would need enthusiasm, consensus, focus and a great deal of hard work. And the results would not be guaranteed. The past six years of City and stakeholder effort has yielded mixed results. Certainly there has been stakeholder enthusiasm and for some, a great deal of hard work, yet there have been problems with focus and consensus.

The City is not on focus for development of Entertainment Arts as a destination Brand. The Entertainment Arts concept as recommended by DDI requires that:

- A number of downtown entertainment venues be established, and
- That Marshall start with a month long festival that offers entertainment every day, and
- That this programming be expanded every other year until a full year of constant entertainment be provided. It was this consistency of entertainment arts product that is to differentiate Marshall from surrounding communities.



Our findings are these:

1. The City of Marshall has drifted off the path toward fulfillment of the brand plan laid out by Destination Development, Inc. The primary resource for funding of brand development – HOT funds are diverted to an array of existing organizations, programs and debt payments rather than concentrated on the development of something new. And, the \$3 million plus that has been spent by the Bureau, has mostly been spent on the wrong priorities. As an example, significant funds have been spent on Wonderland of Lights – a month long event that already existed. Differences of opinion as to how funds have been spent, or what should be done and who should do it has created animosity among various stakeholders and placed many of them into two divided camps. The MCVB, major downtown property owners and some retailers in one camp, and City officials, Main Street and other contractors in the second camp. This has affected unity of direction and consensus.
2. A downtown outdoor entertainment venue has been built (Telegraph Park), but the programming for consistent entertainment at that venue has not been developed. As a result, entertainment at Telegraph Park is inconsistent.
3. The Memorial City Hall Auditorium has not been built, so a critical downtown indoor entertainment venue is missing.
4. An additional and critical missing piece is that a programming plan for the Auditorium has never been developed. This is something that should precede reconstruction of the Hall. Marshall cannot leave to chance that the Auditorium will be able to cover its capital and operating costs, not to mention provide an initial month or season of continuous entertainment options as outlined in the DDI plan. This is part of the problem with the Convention Hall as well. The staff are order-takers, and do not act as sales persons to fill the calendar. The MCVB has also failed to improve usage of the Convention Center, however their focus was and should be on the downtown.
5. With the exception of the Wonderland of Lights Festival, virtually all recent entertainment events are either one-time events, or once a month or once a week events. In addition, the numbers of attendees are small and mostly from the local area. Several if not most, are not expected to make money or have lost money. The small audiences at these entertainment events are early indicators of how difficult it is to lure long distance visitors to something “worthy of the trip.”
6. While the Marshall CVB was created to develop the brand, its activities are not directed enough at the central goal of the DDI Plan. The MCVB frequently acts like a traditional Bureau, involved in many existing and disparate activities, many of which distract from its most important role in brand development. As pointed out, long-term programming – essentially a feasibility analysis – for the Auditorium and the Convention Center has not been developed.
7. The CVB is running the WOL Festival, which is taking up too much of the Bureau staff’s time. Even if the WOL makes money, the MCVB should not be operating it. WOL began as a grass roots festival, and for many years was run on less than \$150,000. It should be returned to the community as a stand-alone festival group. The Bureau should be focused on making the case for outside producers and artists to create events, not creating or operating them in-house. The long term viability of the brand depends upon knowing if events can stand on their own and compensate those who produce them.
8. Labeling Marshall as the home of Wonderland of Lights is counterproductive to the Entertainment Arts Brand. It offers a month’s activity to the Brand, but is not the brand.
9. Even if cut free from the Bureau, Wonderland of Lights content should be reviewed. WOL began as a holiday lighting event with some music. It is now a family festival with rides, carnival food, broadcast music, and children’s fun centers. The focus seems to be on large numbers of visitors, but these visitors’ profiles are not matched to the downtown restaurants and the higher end retail shops. The WOL audience has been described by a downtown leading retailer as “the Wal-Mart crowd” that produces little secondary or diversionary spending.
10. The question was asked, “if we don’t do WOL then what would we do?” This illustrates how off-purpose the CVB’s activities are.



11. In spite of much discussion about “packaging” and supplementing hotel nights, the Bureau has no metrics to measure the effects of existing events on hotels. The corporately owned hotels do quiz their guests as to why they came to Marshall, but this data is not kept in any standard format or shared. GDS could not find one hotel package. The hotels confirm that packaging is not happening, nor is it particularly useful for the few events that are held. Hotel estimates of the percentage of guests that are tourists to Marshall are around 10% on an annualized basis but much higher in some months. The only overnight convention hoteliers could think of was the Goldwing Bikers. They feel that HOT funds go toward items that do not support them and that only advertising dollars should be used from HOT funds for most of these events and organizations. Aside from organizations that receive HOT funds, the hoteliers also feel that they do not receive much business from the Chamber of Commerce’s activities, and several have dropped their memberships.
12. If the hoteliers and the Bureau are to support one another, then occupancy and trip purpose metrics need to be measured and reported on a regular basis. There are about 1,000 hotel rooms in Marshall in 18 hotels, and two downtown bed and breakfast establishments. There are six hotels considered of a grade that they attract most of the pleasure travelers through and to Marshall. They account for about 40% of Marshall’s hotel rooms.
13. A drop in Court activity in patent law and a decrease in oil & gas has caused a drop in HOT revenue.
14. The budget for advertising in MCVB’s primary markets is too small to make a difference. On the other hand, there is little in the way of product strong enough to lure primary markets to Marshall. The closer in core markets come to Marshall for events, but their numbers are small (except for WOL), and they go home at night.
15. The MCVB is too focused on community events – activities that are primarily local in nature and have little appeal to real tourists because they are things visitors can get closer to home. The Bureau got involved in programming of the Second Saturday event, which already existed and replicates what many small communities offer. Other distractions include Car Shows, Walking Tours, Amtrak packages, even meetings and conventions, and family reunions. These are off point. The Bureau’s role should include advertising these diversionary community events, but not get involved in what are essentially local activities, and certainly ones that do not support the brand.
16. Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge is not part of the brand and other than advertising it, the Bureau should not develop programming around it unless it specifically has to do with Entertainment Arts. Currently the Lake has a huge problem with the infestation of Giant Salvinia aquatic weed. This has decreased its appeal, and there is nothing the Bureau can do about it.
17. The Marshall Regional Arts Council does great work with little money and is to be congratulated. But their events are one day only, by their own goals, directed toward a local audience, offer no hotel packages, and generate low box office numbers. The Council may want to consider helping in programming for longer duration Entertainment Arts events. If this can be done, they can be a productive resource for the brand. Some music events the Council brought to the Convention Center like the Oakridge Boys and the Von Trapp Singers were not successful. The Bureau should find out why these failed, so they can learn from the experience.
18. Hotel Occupancy Tax Revenues are diverted away from brand development instead of concentrated on it. Any organization, such as the MCVB that is tasked with building the brand, needs close to \$700k annually to move the needle. However HOT funds are spread thinly over a large number of organizations and obligations.
19. HOT funds in 2010 were \$785k, in 2011, \$724k, and in 2012 \$683k. Substantial enough that if concentrated on Brand Development, would be sufficient. This would include building and programming the Auditorium, the Visual Arts Center, Telegraph Park and other downtown venues.
20. About \$16,500 goes to the Marshall Depot. The museum is neither large nor important enough to be a regional attraction. We are sure the weekly numbers it attracts bears this out. It is questionable whether it should be supported by HOT funds. If the Marshall Depot developed and consistently



offered a quality, visitor interactive experience on a consistent basis, that would justify supporting it with promotional HOT funds.

21. About \$8,750 of HOT funds goes to the Harrison County Historical Museum. This also is off point for brand development and its HOT funds. The Museum currently uses space in the Memorial City Hall building at no expense to the Museum. Whether or not this will impede better functioning of the Auditorium when it is redeveloped is unknown. However, it seems the Convention Center would be a better location to house and or display artifacts that cannot be used in the Harrison County Courthouse.
22. The Michelson Museum of Art receives about \$10k annually of HOT funds. It's unclear whether this goes to advertising or operational expenses. These funds would make sense only if they were used to program events at the museum compatible with Entertainment Arts.
23. The Marshall Regional Arts Council receives annually about \$21k of HOT funds. Of all these parsed out HOT fund expenditures, this contribution makes the most sense related to the brand, particularly if additional programming that supports a large block of entertainment at one time can be achieved.
24. About \$65k of HOT funds goes to private contractors for Boogie Woogie Music programming. The Boogie Woogie program is discussed below.
25. About \$114k annually of debt service on the Convention Center comes from HOT funds. The Convention Center (formerly Civic Center) is almost unused in support of the Entertainment Arts brand. The MCVB and the hotels are not even members of the Advisory Board of the Center. In 2012 it was used a handful of days for music or entertainment arts, and the audiences it draws are small. Nothing longer than three or four days is ever performed at the Center. The Center is located too far from the downtown to create any synergy with downtown restaurants or shopping. Yet HOT funds are being used to retire the debt. Even as a local Civic Center, utilization is poor. There were only 199 days of events of any kind in 2012 (181 days in 2010 and 278 days in 2011). If the Civic Center truly is losing \$200k a year in operating costs, serious consideration should be given to closing it until a program for profitable use can be devised and a proven sales team assigned to book it. Many of the local events currently using the Civic Center could use hotel banquet space instead.
26. HOT funds are used to pay around \$170k in interest and principle on the \$2.1 million in bond funds for the Memorial City Hall Auditorium rehabilitation. About \$1.5 million remains in the fund, after recent expenditures on architectural plans and other expenses. The plans were designed for a \$2.1 to \$3.1 million renovation depending on whether or not the City acts as its own general contractor. The City is looking for a new architect to complete modifications and cost reductions and to advise the City on its bidding and construction phases.
27. Boogie Woogie Music. There is evidence that the formation of Boogie Woogie music took place in rural wooded areas and on railroad land near Marshall. Some have refuted the evidence, but in considering ownership by the City of Marshall of the title "Birthplace of Boogie Woogie Music" it hardly matters. No other place is claiming it, and for now, Marshall has as good or better a claim as anywhere and in fact acquired trademarks and registrations to bolster its claim. Boogie Woogie music is a niche market, and has limitations that keep it from replacing the Entertainment Arts brand. It has limited appeal as evidenced by the numbers who have attended concerts. There are simply not enough people that can be lured to Marshall for an hour or two hour session of Boogie Woogie music, on a consistent basis, as would be required if it were the brand. Attendance can be improved through more awareness and education, but we are still of the opinion that as a core brand it would not generate the numbers of enthusiasts needed to make it economically viable as Marshall's brand.

It is probable that the Cansons understand this. Many of the music events they have brought to Marshall are not Boogie Woogie at all, but rock, jazz, the blues or soul. The argument has been made that these forms of music had their origins in Boogie Woogie. For rock, jazz, the blues and soul that also may be debatable. Nevertheless, millions enjoy these forms of music without any knowledge of Boogie Woogie or its connection. Each of these styles of music is appropriate to the Entertainment Arts Brand and DDI recommended these types of music to be included.



Labeling “Boogie Woogie Wednesdays” and offering some other form of music is not advancing the cause of Marshall as the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie. If advertised, it should be offered.

After three years of the City subsidizing and nurturing Boogie Woogie, there is little evidence of widespread commercial interest in it. It needs to be commercially successful. The City cannot subsidize entertainment indefinitely to see if it is self-sustaining. The City has spent \$230k on Boogie Woogie and it needs to demonstrate its ability to stand on its own.

There are two aspects of Boogie Woogie that should be valuable to the Marshall Entertainment Arts brand. First, programming should be developed into a song, dance and narrative show that would feature the history of Boogie Woogie music, its development, demonstrations of its links to other forms of American music, and with audience participation. The Cansons recommended this, but it has to be profitable for the producers, not subsidized by the City. Secondly, the story of Boogie Woogie music should be told within the context and the broader perspective of local African-American history, so that African-American ownership of this historical legacy can be reinforced.

Finally, the development of this niche product as a part of the overall Entertainment Arts brand should be placed back in the purview of the MCVB where it began when the Bureau approved the Boogie Woogie Production Proposal in April 2010. While several interviewees have suggested that the Bureau does not support Boogie Woogie, we found evidence in all its marketing materials to the contrary. But we also found a reasonable hesitancy on the part of the Bureau to move too fast in embracing Boogie Woogie as the core brand. We believe it has an important role to play, but not the central role.

28. Marshall’s Main Street Program does not receive any HOT funds, operates with general funds and City employees, yet its programming is intimately tied into making downtown Marshall the branded destination that will attract new money. Marshall’s Main Street Program does retail promotions (Second Saturday), special events (Symphony’s Jeans and Classics, Rotary’s Faux Paws, concerts, car shows, garden tours, fall festival, etc.). These fall under the “Promotion Point” of National Main Street Four-Point Approach®. Main Street also generates ongoing contributions of volunteer time and cash funding for charitable events such as Old House Workshops, Pots and Plants, Camp I’m still Me, Fall Festival and Santa’s Workshop. In spite of strong tension between Main Street and MCVB, the Main Street accomplishes a lot of worthwhile local civic activities.

There are two other Points to the National Main Street Program that need more attention if Main Street is to support Marshall’s downtown development as a visitor-based economy. The first has to do with design — getting the downtown into top physical shape, particularly with regards to storefronts, curb appeal, and merchandising. While a number of downtown buildings have been rehabilitated over the past six years, their storefronts mostly lack imagination, artistic design and color palettes that could add considerable appeal to the downtown. Likewise, most of the storefronts would benefit from upgraded curb appeal through better lighting, potted plants or trees. And front window merchandising could be better. These activities fall directly within the role of Main Street.

Another of the four points in the National Main Street Four Point Approach® is Economic Restructuring – retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix (in Marshall’s case, retail that appeals to visitors). MCVB hired a recruiter in its early years, but it appears that person was not skilled or equipped to produce (particularly in a depressed year), nor did the Bureau hold his feet to the fire. The results were non-existent. However, recruitment is a legitimate role for the Main Street Program and is important in creating a critical mass of attractive shopping in the downtown.

29. The Marshall Visual Art Center is currently the only indoor space in downtown that can accommodate event crowds up to 450 people, yet it has real limitations as to its functionality for live theater, and some music events. Improvements were made in the last six years, but serious limitations still remain and the space will never be suitable for many types of performances.
30. Josey Ranch, located about 7.5 miles from downtown Marshall, brings students and event participants to the area several times a year. About 27% stay in local hotels (the majority bring their own trailers so they may remain with their horses on the ranch.) The DDI Plan listed equestrian sports as a niche or sub-brand for Marshall.



31. East Texas Baptist University figured into one of DDI's recommendations, as did Wiley College. It was recommended that ETBU's Fine Arts School and their music and theater programs form part of the downtown Entertainment Arts in downtown Marshall. Currently the University has a black box theatre and a 1,600 seat chapel. The School is still interested in performing downtown if the Memorial City Hall Auditorium is reopened. They would want an agreement to the effect of a specific number of nights for events. Quite a few of their productions would be possible in the Auditorium. ETBU was given the Hotel Marshall in November 2012. It is anticipated it will be used for graduate programs of the University, but the lobby could be used for some receptions and small events.
32. The Chamber of Commerce is the voice of its business community members. As a 501(c) 6, it put on the Fire Ant Festival. They support the idea of the January Health Fest, Boogie Woogie music.



Appendices

Appendix A – Interviews

The following individuals were interviewed for this review:

Meeting with the Marshall City Commissioners: Gloria Moon, Zephaniah Timmins, John Flowers, Charlie Oliver, Garrett Boersma, Ed Smith, (Bill Marshall, absent). GDS had additional conversations with Bill Marshall, John Flowers and Garrett Boersma.

Frank Johnson, City Manager

Mayor Ed Smith

Ed Michel and MCVB Board of Directors, Ed Michele (second interview) and Ed Michele & Mark Maden, Chairman of the Board (third interview).

Steve Carlile, Celebrating Home. Former MCVB Chairman

Jerry Cargill, Downtown Investor. Former MCVB Board Member

Henry Bradbury, The Bradbury Group, LLC

Jack and Nancy Canson, Canson & Canson. Boogie Woogie music contractors.

Jan Black, Proprietor, OS2 Restaurant

Tony McCullough, Marketing Director, Josey Ranch

Connie Ware, President, Marshall Texas Chamber of Commerce

Jason Roesner, Director, Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Ron Munden, Owner, EastTexasTowns.com and project manager on the original DDI Brand

Dr. Tom Webster, Dean, College of Fine Arts, ETBU

Joyce Weekly, Director and Dr. Frank Lower, Chairman, Marshall Regional Arts Council

Bo Ellis, Director, Main Street Marshall

Rob and Deb Sorich, Proprietors, Central Perks

HOTEL Interviews -

By Phone:

American's Best Value Inn, Harry Patel

Best Western Executive Inn, Pete Patel

Burnett Motel, Jay Patel

Budget Inn, Mike

Days Inn and Suites, Rina Patel

Holiday Inn Express, Patrick Hilchey

Motel 6, Inc., Jeremy

Texas Inn, Dee Patel

Three Oaks Bed & Breakfast, Donna Muffin

Wisteria Garden Bed & Breakfast, Marylynn Vassar

In Person:

Comfort Suites, Vinod Patel

Hampton Inn, Isha George

Holiday Inn Express, Patrick Hilchey

Quality Inn, Riba Patel

Super 8 Motel, David Patel

Best Western Executive Inn, Pete Patel



Appendix B - Documents Reviewed

The following documents were examined for this review:

Original Destination Development Inc. Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan, July 2007

DDI combined Plan Review 2013 (review of original plan recommendations by MCVB and City)

Marshall MCVB 2012 Business Plan

Marshall MCVB 2013 Goals

Marshall MCVB Bylaws

Marshall MCVB Statement of Revenue, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance, 2010, 2011, 2012

Marshall MCVB Profit & Loss Statements (with detail), 2010, 2011, 2012

Funding Provided Marshall MCVB (City printout) 2008-2013

MCVB Activity Report 3rd Qtr., 2012 (example)

Folio of MCVB Advertising, Collateral and Press Releases

Wonderland of Lights Documents

The Economic Impact of the Wonderland of Lights Festival (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension)

Wonderland of Lights Festival one page brief on economic impact

Wonderland of Lights Festival PowerPoint on economic Impact

Brief report to the City Commission on the 2010 Wonderland of Lights event

2011 Wonderland of Lights Report to City Commissioners (23 pages)

2012 Wonderland of Lights Festival Summary Report to City Commission (12 pages)

Wonderland of Lights 27th Annual Festival Brochure

A Brief History & Review, Marshall, Texas Birthplace of Boogie Woogie Program

Marshall, Texas Birthplace of Boogie Woogie (DVD)

MCVB Boogie Woogie Timeline

Downtown Progress Recap (PowerPoint and List)

HOT Funds Documents

Marshall Hotel Contact List

Hot Funds 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

Marshall HOT Revenues by Month 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

Texas Tax Code Title 2, Local Taxation, Subtitle D, Chapter 351, Hotel Occupancy Taxes

Josey Reunion (DVD)

Josey Ranch 2014 Event Schedule

Josey Ranch Survey of Student Expenditures for 2013 Spring and Summer Events

Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge flier and map

Marshall Regional Arts Council expenditure sheet – June, 2012 – May, 2013

Marshall Regional Arts Council 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 Concert Series brochures

2014 Health Fest Flyer

ETBU School of Fine Arts Fall 2013 Calendar

Convention Center bookings for 2010-2013



Appendix c – Summary of Reconnaissance

During the week of November 18-22, GDS conducted a reconnaissance of the greater Marshall area, including visits to Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Caddo Lake State Park, Josey Ranch, The Civic (Convention) Center, the Texas & Pacific Depot and Museum, Harrison County Courthouse, Boogie Woogie Wednesdays, the Marshall Visual Art Center, the MCVB Visitor Center and the downtown area.

Several new additions since our last visit in 2007 to the downtown were noted, including, Telegraph Park & Stage, additional public parking, public restrooms, some wayfinding signage, a number of new loft apartments, the MADI Art Wall, façade restorations, Charlie's Backyard Bar and Grill, and new shops at the Grand gateway to downtown. The Marshall Hotel was donated to East Texas Baptist University. \$550,000 of HOT funds were used on the restoration of this building.



Appendix D – Notes on Hotel Occupancy Tax for Marshall

Part of our investigation included a review of the State of Texas law that spells out how HOT funds are to be used.

Chapter 351 of the Texas State Statutes sets forth how local hotel occupancy taxes may be spent by local municipalities. In this chapter, "Tourism" means the guidance or management of tourists.

"Tourist" means an individual who travels from the individual's residence to a different municipality, county, state, or country for pleasure, recreation, education, or culture.

In the case of towns the size of Marshall, this includes the following (pertinent sections only):

*Revenue from the municipal **hotel occupancy tax** may be used only to promote tourism and the convention and **hotel** industry, and that use is limited to the following:*

- (1) the acquisition of sites for and the construction, improvement, enlarging, equipping, repairing, operation, and maintenance of convention center facilities or visitor information centers, or both;*
- (2) the furnishing of facilities, personnel, and materials for the registration of convention delegates or registrants;*
- (3) advertising and conducting solicitations and promotional programs to attract tourists and convention delegates or registrants to the municipality or its vicinity;*
- (4) the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts, including instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, motion pictures, radio, television, tape and sound recording, and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms;*
- (5) historical restoration and preservation projects or activities or advertising and conducting solicitations and promotional programs to encourage tourists and convention delegates to visit preserved historic sites or museums:*
 - (A) at or in the immediate vicinity of convention center facilities or visitor information centers; or*
 - (B) located elsewhere in the municipality or its vicinity that would be frequented by tourists and convention delegates;*
- (9) signage directing the public to sights and attractions that are visited frequently by **hotel** guests in the municipality;*
- (b) Revenue derived from the **tax** authorized by this chapter shall be expended in a manner directly enhancing and promoting tourism and the convention and **hotel** industry as permitted by Subsection (a). That revenue may not be used for the general revenue purposes or general governmental operations of a municipality.*
- (e) **Hotel occupancy tax** revenue spent for a purpose authorized by this section may be spent for day-to-day operations, supplies, salaries, office rental, travel expenses, and other administrative costs only if those administrative costs are incurred directly in the promotion and servicing expenditures authorized under Section 351.101(a). If a municipal or other public or private entity that conducts an activity authorized under this section conducts other activities that are not*



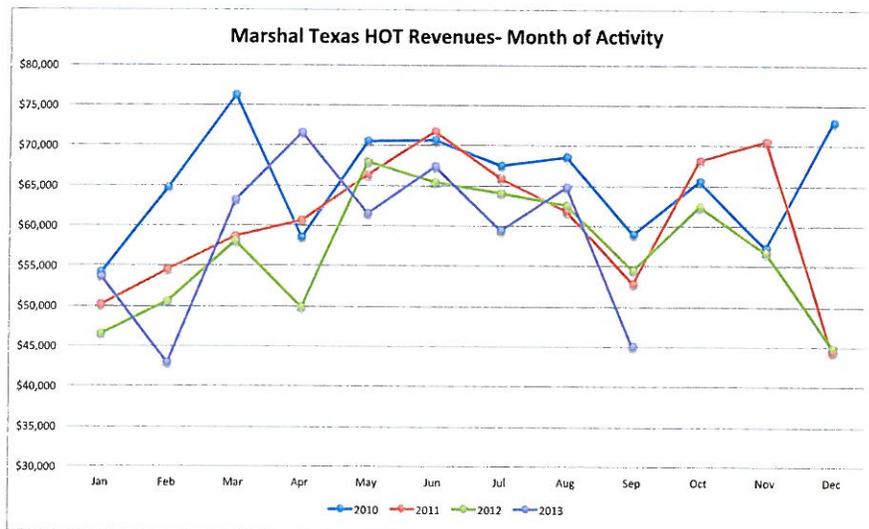
authorized under this section, the portion of the total administrative costs of the entity for which **hotel occupancy tax** revenue may be used may not exceed the portion of those administrative costs actually incurred in conducting the authorized activities.

Sec. 351.102. PLEDGE FOR BONDS. (a) Subject to the limitations provided by this subchapter, a municipality may pledge the revenue derived from the tax imposed under this chapter for the payment of bonds that are issued under Section 1504.002(a), Government Code, for one or more of the purposes provided by Section 351.101 or, >>>

The City of Marshall disburses HOT funds to a number of organizations. Typically the following organizations receive the following amounts:

- Depot & Museum - \$16,500
- Harrison County Historical Museum - \$8,750
- Michelson Museum of Art - \$10,000
- Marshall Regional Arts Council - \$21,150
- Convention Center - \$114k for bond debt retirement
- Memorial City Hall Auditorium – various amounts for bond debt retirement (will be \$170k annually when construction begins.)
- In addition, about \$550k of HOT funds were spent on the Hotel Marshall when it was under consideration as a commercial enterprise. We did not investigate if any of these funds should be returned to the HOT Fund since the property was given to ETBU.

HOT Funds fluctuate by month and have decreased over the past few years, primarily due to a drop in business-related hotel guests – oil and gas, attorneys, etc. This level of activity is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.



HOT Revenues by Year

Year	HOT Revenues Generated
2010	\$785,361
2011	\$724,902
2012	\$683,062



Appendix E – Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau Notes

The MCVB is formed under the Texas Business Organizations Code, Chapter 22.

When the MCVB was formed, it was decided to have the CVB pay the city for employee salaries so that they would get the same benefits as City employees. Evidently all MCVB employees are now paid this way. MCVB was intended by DDI to be at arms length, a third party entity under contract with the City. Instead, the city established the MCVB by resolution, the City can remove Board Officers at any time, the City approves the Board members, a City Commissioner sits on the Board ex officio, but does not vote, the MCVB follows open meeting act, the MCVB follows city account practices of cash accounting rather than accrual accounting, the City has to approve of the MCVB budget.

Fairly detailed monthly reports are required by the City on the MCVB's activities. MCVB receives HOT funds from the City based on an annual contract, although HOT fund payments can change throughout the year.

MCVB occupies rented space in an effective location on Washington Street. (Some criticism has been made of this situation. MCVB asked for improvements to the property (\$75,000) that was amortized over five years and increased the monthly rent from a market priced \$1,200 per month to \$2,500 per month. Cost overages of the interior improvements and of external improvements were borne by the building owner. The City Attorney handled the lease agreement.

Total Payments made by the City to the MCVB by Year

Year	Total
2008	\$661,000
2009	\$775,000
2010	\$614,662.79
2011	\$459,892.01
2012	\$373,052.12
2013	\$344,869.40
Total	3,228,476.32

MCVB Goals

The MCVB sets a number of goals each year. In 2012 there were eleven goals, including:

Goal One: Product Development. Activities under this goal included:

- Enhancing the already existing Saturday events (Second Saturday) with themes
- Create and promote hotel packages
- Develop a historical walking tour of Marshall
- Implement a historical campus tour of Wiley College
- Develop Amtrak intermodal packages



- Organize a Musicians Guild (did this happen?)
- Create various itineraries including overnight and weekend.

These product development goals are small, some of the activities already existed, and none are compelling enough to attract overnight guests.

Goal Two: Increase Marshall's awareness in primary and core markets

Dallas/Ft. Worth, Houston, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Baton Rouge and Little Rock/Pine Bluff are listed as the primary markets. Shreveport/Bossier City, Tyler and Longview are considered core markets.

Marshall has no arts and entertainment product that is compelling enough to attract large numbers from these primary markets.

Goal Three: Capitalize on Wonderland of Lights success

WOL is a local area success but it is not a success in terms of attracting large numbers of overnight visitors from stated primary markets.

In 2010, the MCVB operated WOL. Revenues and donations from WOL that year totaled \$408,137 and WOL expenses totaled \$817,904 for a loss of \$409,767.

In 2011, the MCVB operated WOL, and revenues and donations from WOL totaled \$135,870, and expenses totaled 234,284, for a loss of \$98,414.

In 2012, the MCVB operated WOL and revenues and donations from WOL totaled \$374,435, and expenses totaled 318,884 for a profit of \$55,551.

By taking on Wonderland of Lights, the MCVB moved from product development and marketing to taking on the responsibilities and financial risks of event production. This also moved scarce resources from attracting and leveraging private sector capital, to financing a project without limitations on its financial risk.

WOL has also changed in composition from a grass roots and volunteer based community event to a MCVB operated event. New components were added to attract visitors and to add revenue e.g., inflatable attractions for kids, concession stands and rides.

Goal Four: Expand sales efforts in niche markets

This goal is to focus on family reunions, bus groups and conventions/meetings/affinity organizations. We saw no evidence that any of these have significantly increased. There is evidence that the convention center and the MCVB do not communicate effectively and that there are few inquiries for branded events at the center.

Goal Five: Raise the community's awareness of tourism's impact

While this topic was not specifically researched, no evidence was presented that suggests a majority of the citizens of Marshall have achieved an awareness or understanding of the Marshall Brand.

Goal Six: Enhance relationships with community organizations and businesses.

Evidence from community interviews conducted point to the opposite of this goal happening. There is outright hostility toward the bureau from some within the community.

Goal Seven: Continue using the DDI plan as the framework for long-term tourism development.



Each of the 53 DDI Recommendations will be reviewed under a separate heading. However, because of the emphasis of funds and MCVB personnel time devoted toward the Wonderland of Lights Festival, it is pretty clear that the focus on long-term tourism development has suffered while attention has been spent on maintaining what was an existing and mostly local area and seasonal attraction.

Goal Eight: Operate the Visitors Center to meet the interests of the public.

The Visitors Center is well located and appointed.

Goal Nine: Develop baseline visitor research and profiles

The only research GDS has knowledge of is the collection of zip codes from WOL ticket purchasers. The Bureau lists its primary and core markets.

Goal Ten: Pursue additional forms of funding

Existing sponsorships seems to be related to Wonderland of Lights, not the MCVB's long-term activities.

Goal Eleven: Implement "Center Stage" brand

The MCVB uses the Center Stage tagline in its marketing efforts.

In 2013 MCVB reduced its number of Goals to five.

1. Brand the City
2. Continue "product development"
3. Focus sales efforts in niche markets
4. Strengthen Marshall's awareness in primary and core markets
5. Provide value to stakeholders and visitors

Beginning in 2007, based on recommendations of the DDI Plan, MCVB had hired several different consultants in order to recruit new businesses into the downtown, to create and execute a wayfinding plan, and to prepare an Urban Design Study. GDS has not reviewed any of these documents.



GDS Assessment of 53 Tourism Plan Recommendations

on
Destination Development Inc.'s
Branding, Product Development & Marketing Action Plan

Summary of Recommendations, Implementation Responsibilities
(indicated in parentheses)
and Status of Recommendations with City Assessment Added

Recommendation #1

Our recommendation is to develop an entertainment or performing arts brand with the hub of the brand located in downtown Marshall. (Every Organization)

Status: This recommendation was completed in that the “brand” originally suggested in the DDI plan to be built upon entertainment in the downtown area. This concept has been accepted but efforts will be ongoing to encourage the growth of the entertainment. To date, only one of the seven entertainment areas have been addressed – Musical Performance. Marshall has made progress but still is not known as the center for entertainment in East Texas and it may be three to five years still away from the marking this complete.

Estimated % complete: 50%

City assessment:

Development of the entertainment arts brand began when the Tourism Plan was adopted in 2007 and has been ongoing since that time. No organization or person with a significant role in the implementation of the plan has disregarded the effort to implement the plan since the plan was adopted. The CVB currently has implementation of the plan at the forefront of a large majority of their programs, tasks, and general efforts. The plan is referenced frequently in their conversations and presentations, and their reports relate their efforts to the plan.

GDS Assessment:

Acceptance of the Brand by the City or MCVB does not constitute development of the brand. The brand is real when it is perceived as such in the minds of the targeted consuming public. And, embraced and advocated by the citizens of Marshall. Both of these things still need to be achieved.



Recommendation #2

We recommend that Marshall adopt the tag line, or slogan, “Center Stage” for its marketing efforts. The brand is “Center Stage for the Arts”, but that would typically be said in the body copy of all marketing materials. The slogan “Center Stage” would be used to promote the overall brand, for both downtown, the community, and even for economic development efforts. (Every Organization)

Status: “Center Stage” was accepted as the tag line and has been used in promotional and marketing campaigns by the Convention & Visitors Bureau since January, 2012. No other community entity has expressed a willingness to incorporate it in any ongoing campaigns. The recommendation states: “Local residents must be aware of, accept, and promote the brand.” This is still to happen.

Estimated % complete: 25%

City assessment:

The tag line “Center Stage” has been adopted. The CVB seems to have increased its usage of the tag line recently and is promoting the concept more than it has in the past.

GDS Assessment:

The use of the Center Stage slogan has gotten too far out in front of the delivery of entertainment arts that constitute the brand. There is a danger of damaging the brand image if delivery of the product does not match the marketing. DDI called for playing down the brand until the first major branded festival would take place (planned in year 3).



Recommendation #3

Adopt a citywide logo identity of entertainment arts. (City, CVB, Chamber of Commerce)

Status: While the logo presented by the Lux company has been implemented by the CVB, the Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC) arranged a meeting with the City and the Chamber of Commerce to discuss implementing the use of a logo in all organizations. The result of the meeting was that another logo should be designed that might be more adaptable and/or acceptable by all organizations. That process is stalled. At the meeting with the City and Chamber representatives, neither the City nor the Chamber would commit to using a standard logo. As DDI state: "politics kills." It may be impossible to implement this recommendation if all three organizations cannot agree on the concept of using a common logo.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

A logo was proposed two to three years ago, but it was not adopted. The CVB has re-started efforts recently to get a city-wide logo adopted.

GDS Assessment:

Logos have always created more controversy than their importance demands. This is because it is the visible part of the brand, and everyone has different tastes in design. MCVB should take a deep breath and work toward a logo that everyone will use, especially if it means they will then get behind the brand development programs. Besides, the true value of a logo is in the value of the brand experience, not in the design itself.



Recommendation #4

Adopt niche-market sub-brands for direct marketing efforts. (CVB)

Status: MAC identified the following niche-markets – Caddo Lake, State Park and the National Wildlife Refuge; Josey Ranch; runs & running Clubs; bicycling; Boogie Woogie; and Get Healthy Marshall. MAC is suggesting that a focus on these brands be considered in future marketing plans. The DDI plan recommends that 20% of the advertising budget be used on niche markets. The plan for expenditures has not been specifically allocated and must be in place to complete this recommendation.

Estimated % complete: 60%

City assessment:

Some work has been done on niche brands. Support of barrel racing at Josey's Ranch is an example. The Birthplace of Boogie Woogie program is another example.

GDS Assessment:

Caddo Lake can be marketed as a diversion, but it does not rise to the level of a niche brand. Josey Ranch is a niche brand. Boogie Woogie and Get Healthy Marshall should not be sold as a niche brand, but rather incorporated into the Entertainment Arts brand itself. Remember, DDI included culinary arts as a part of the brand. Get Healthy Marshall can be projected as a culinary art. The inclusion of Boogie Woogie is self-explanatory.



Recommendation #5

Adopt the downtown district identity of Washington Square and make downtown the destination point. (City)

Status: While the Washington Square identity has been named, there has been a lack of utilization of all entities to commonly incorporate the identity in promotional efforts as well as no signage is installed and maps do not identify the district. The effort to develop attractions and amenities in a concentrated downtown area is underway and a tremendous effort to achieve this recommendation over the past five years has taken place.

Estimated % complete: 50%

City assessment:

The Washington Square identity was established when the Tourism Plan was adopted. The name and the concept were embraced initially, and were used more initially than they are currently.

GDS Assessment:

Identification of the Washington Square identity is important because it circumscribes the physical concentrated area for the Entertainment Arts Brand. The area should receive signage and at least two Gateways identifying it as such. Wayfinding signs in other parts of town should reference Washington Square, not downtown or business district. Remember, keep the brand in a pedestrian setting when at all possible.



Recommendation #6

Establish the boundaries of the downtown Washington Square district. (City)

Status: The perimeter of Washington Square is defined as Grand Avenue on the north, Wellington Street on the west, Lafayette Street on the east, and Bowie Street on the south. Other than identifying the boundaries on paper, no further effort by any entities to utilize this district has occurred.

Estimated % complete: 100%

City assessment:

The boundaries of Washington Square have been established as Grand Avenue on the north, Lafayette Street on the east, Bowie Street on the south, and Franklin Street on the west.

GDS Assessment:

The boundaries need to be used in maps of the downtown area showing the venues for branded activities.



Recommendation #7

Create a Brand Standards & Practices Guide. (City, Brand Development Committee)

Status: The Guide has been completed and is incorporated in the CVB's marketing effort. If a new logo is developed, a new guide will need to be produced. However, as a new logo is desired to be developed, a new guide will need to be produced.

Estimated % complete: 60%

City assessment:

A draft of a Brand Standards Guide was created by Luxe under contract to the CVB. The Brand Standards Guide was never finalized, adopted, or actively promoted.

GDS Assessment:

When a consensus logo, tag line, color palette have been accepted by the City government, the CVB, the Chamber, and the stakeholders, then a Brand Standards Guide will make sense.



Recommendation #8

Encourage the adoption of the Brand Standards and Practice Guide by local organizations including the city, Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses, and citizens of Marshall to help reinforce the brand. (Entire Community)

Status: The Guide is being implemented by the CVB based on the current logo. However, it is the only entity currently utilizing the logo/brand message of Center Stage. However, neither the City or the Chamber are agreeing to incorporate the use of their guide in their marketing efforts.

Estimated % complete: 40%

City assessment:

In the absence of a finalized and adopted Brand Standards Guide as noted in #7, nothing was ever promoted for adoption by other organizations. As noted in #3, the CVB has recently revived efforts to get the CVB, the City, the Chamber of Commerce, and possibly other organizations in the community to utilize a common logo, which would be a good step toward usage by multiple organizations of a common standard.

GDS Assessment:

Wait for consensus before developing common standards. It is often helpful to take a “master logo” and develop variations for different organizations that will be supporting the brand so that they have their own identity mark but are within a “family” of logos.



Recommendation #9

Hire professional planning services to develop new performing arts venues and architectural standards for the Washington Square district of downtown Marshall. (City)

Status: We believe that a document “The Townscape Plan” was prepared and is in City’s files. However, there is no indication that the City has moved toward implementing this plan.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

A planning consultant was hired by the CVB to develop a concept plan for performing arts venues and architectural standards for Washington Square. The consultants did a good job of developing the plan based on input received from the community. Steps have been taken to implement some of the plan. These steps include renovation of what is now known as Telegraph Park and construction of the new restroom building.

GDS Assessment:

We cannot comment on this plan because we have not seen or reviewed it.



Recommendation #10

Acquire outdoor performance and event locations for downtown. (City & Downtown Development Corp.)

Status: This recommendation was completed with the establishment of Telegraph Park unless the community decides that additional facilities are needed. Additional temporary outdoor locations have been utilized including sidewalk space in front of Under The Texas Sun, Band Stand Music, and other locations including the Michelson Museum. These alternative sites (including Charlie's Backyard Pub) were not envisioned by the DDI plan but are being used.

Estimated % complete: 100%

City assessment:

No outdoor performance and event locations have been acquired downtown. However, there are locations that have come to be used with some regularity that effectively implement this recommendation. Telegraph Park is used for this purpose, as it was intended to be. The north side of the Old Courthouse grounds facing North Washington is often used as a performance location. Two or three locations on the sidewalk on North Washington have also been used successfully at times as performance locations. North Washington Street itself, particularly in the 200 block, is regularly used as an event location for Second Saturday, class reunions, the Jeans 'n Classics Symphony performance in September, and other events.

GDS Assessment:

The City lost a real opportunity when it permitted Chase Bank to construct a new building so close to the Harrison County Courthouse and within the area DDI recommended for a superior outdoor performance venue. This was an important site for the brand. Another area within the Washington Square District will have to be found.



Recommendation #11

Create a permanent venue for a downtown outdoor market. (CVB)

Status: As Harrison County is providing a covered area two blocks south of the courthouse, the regular vendors utilizing this facility are not interested in pursuing another location . It is possible that a venue could still be established but the vendors would have to be convinced first in order to utilize an alternative location.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

The Farmers' Market is still operating at the location that was established several years ago at Wellington and Fannin. This venue is permanent, and it is located in the general downtown area, but it does not relate well to the downtown core and the Washington Square District that is intended to be the focus of activity. Some farmers do participate in Second Saturday on North Washington, but there is not a permanent location in Washington Square as called for in this recommendation.

GDS Assessment:

This recommendation should probably be abandoned, if the farmers are happy where they are. It is not central to the success of the brand.



Recommendation #12

Adopt an ordinance for street performers. (City)

Status: This recommendation was never addressed by the City.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

An ordinance for street performers has not been adopted.

GDS Assessment:

We have not investigated the lack of interest in this recommendation, or any issues or concerns that may surround it. This is a low cost way of adding to the brand. DDI placed some guidelines around it so it could be controlled. It should be pursued, but more importantly, street performers should be encouraged. There are already participants on some nights, and maybe an ordinance is not necessary.



Recommendation #13

Contract for a feasibility and engineering study for both the Paramount Theater and Memorial City Hall. (City)

Status: The city has conducted the engineering study for Memorial City Hall. At this time, it is not financially practical for the community to pay for activity regarding the Paramount Theater.

Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

A contract was entered into by the CVB for a concept study for Memorial City Hall and other possible performance venues in Washington Square. The Paramount Theater was mentioned in the study but was not addressed in any detail because it is under private ownership. A rough draft of the study was prepared, but a detailed final feasibility study for Memorial City Hall was not completed.

GDS Assessment:

We have not reviewed the drafted study. Paramount Theater should be dropped from further consideration in the plan. Perhaps the city can condemn the Paramount Theater property as a fire hazard, and have it demolished. The property might then be used for something else related to the brand.



Recommendation #14

Convert the Memorial City Hall building and Auditorium into a performing arts center.
(City & Downtown Development Corp)

Status: The City has been working on this project for a lengthy time with no target completion date announced or determined.

Estimated % complete: 10%

City assessment:

A revenue bond was issued to finance the renovation of Memorial City Hall along with two federal grants and money from the City's General Fund. The architectural design work for the project has been completed. The contract with the architect was terminated in late 2011. The project has not moved forward since that time. The CVB has stated that this project will be a beneficial addition to the effort to provide the number and types of activities to aid in drawing visitors from outside the immediate area to Marshall. The CVB supports this project and would like to see it move forward.

GDS Assessment:

The conversion of the Memorial City Hall building and Auditorium into a performing arts center was central to the development of the brand. If it is to be developed, then prior to construction, a programming plan for how the Auditorium is to be filled with specific shows, should be developed and estimates of revenues and costs prepared. At least the operating costs of the Auditorium should be covered by the plan. If the case cannot be made for break even, then the construction should not begin. Revenues should come from outside production companies and sources other than the City general fund or HOT funds. The City should know what programs will use the Auditorium before building it.



Recommendation #15

A private developer should buy the Paramount Theater building and develop it as a performing arts center with regularly scheduled acts. (Private developer, public/private.)

Status: Owners of the Paramount property are uncooperative. Any effort to develop this property should be dropped.

Estimated % complete: 0% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

No action has occurred on this recommendation. The building is not in good condition and will require a substantial amount of money to renovate. It is probably not feasible for a person or group of people to take this project on as a private for-profit venture.

GDS Assessment:

Agree. This recommendation should be dropped from the plan.



Recommendation #16

The City should recruit a downtown hotel. (Contract recruiter/Private Developer)

Status: The owners of the Hotel Marshall are continuing their attempts to encourage an outside developer to purchase the property and renovate the building for a downtown hotel.

Estimated % complete: 50%

City assessment:

Some discussions have been held about this recommendation. Local hotel owners do not consider it to be a financially viable venture for a hotel that is typical of the types that exist in the Marshall market. The possibility of a boutique hotel or historic inn has been discussed. The success of this type of venture would be largely dependent on the activity in the Federal Courthouse, which has diminished substantially. At this time it would be difficult for this type of venture to succeed. This recommendation needs to remain under evaluation.

GDS Assessment:

The feasibility of a downtown hotel will depend on the brand effort successfully generating substantial overnight tourist traffic in the downtown on a consistent basis. Until that happens, this recommendation should be set aside.



Recommendation #17

Encourage residential condominium and apartment development in downtown Marshall. (Main Street Manager)

Status: Individual property owners have moved forward with this recommendation based on demand with a number of individual units available.

Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

The encouragement of residences in the Washington Square district is ongoing. Incentives are available from the City to aid in this effort. Approximately ten living units have been developed in Washington Square, but there does not appear to be a strong demand for them in the marketplace. To some degree, this effort has also been impacted by the decline in patent lawsuit activity at the Federal Courthouse.

GDS Assessment:

A certain type of person wants to live in a downtown. Generally they are younger and looking for activities and excitement. Downtown Marshall will be in better shape to attract these condo buyers if the retail mix is larger, with interesting bars, restaurants, and boutique shops. Also if the storefronts (facades) are improved, more colorful and interesting, and if other residents are attracted to the downtown so that it is animated in the evenings. Lighting is another attractor, and DDI recommended year round lighting of the downtown with white lights. These are all legitimate activities for the Marshall Main Street program and would improve the downtown regardless of whether or not the brand is pursued or becomes successful.



Recommendation #18

Recruit retail business into downtown. (Brand Development Manager)

Status: The Brand Development Committee hired a Retail Recruiter very early in the process of implementing. The person was hired too early and after spending \$80,000 and getting no businesses or deliverables the person was released. It is unrealistic to spend any more money on the recommendation.

Estimated % complete: 0% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

The CVB contracted with a retail recruiter in late 2007 or early 2008 to begin the effort to implement this recommendation. The downturn in the economy that became significant and accelerated in the fall of 2008 severely impacted this effort. The CVB chose to discontinue the contract with the retail recruiter in late 2008 or early 2009 due to the extremely limited chances of results given the condition of the economy. No consideration has been given to restarting this effort due to the ongoing and persistent conditions in the economy.

GDS Assessment:

Walking away from this recommendation will cause the Brand to fail. It is critical that the downtown, particularly Washington Street, be populated with interesting shops, places to eat and entertainment. Eighty percent of visitor spending will occur on these diversions after they experience the branded lure that brought them to downtown. Accomplishing this recommendation is equally as important as the branded entertainment itself. Consideration should be given to making this the task of the Main Street Program. The National Main Street program may be able to provide case studies and guidance for how to achieve this.



Recommendation #19

Attract an RV park development near downtown. (Private developer recruited by the Brand Development Recruiter)

Status: At this time, there is not enough demand for a facility to entice a developer to invest the money require to achieve this recommendation in the three to five year range.

Estimated % complete: 0% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

No work has been done on this recommendation.

GDS Assessment:

We have not seen any evidence that there is not enough demand for an RV park development near downtown. That does not mean that it is not true, but we have not seen any demonstrated result that this was investigated and confirmed.



Recommendation #20

Adopt a downtown ordinance permitting sidewalk dining. (City)

Status: While some sidewalk dining is now in place the City has never addressed this recommendation. Any further action would be up to the City.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

An effort was begun in late 2007 and early 2008 to prepare this ordinance and propose it for adoption. The Tourism Plan consultant indicated that the effort was premature at that time, and, consequently, the effort was dropped. It has not been brought back up for consideration.

GDS Assessment:

We're not aware of which tourism consultant indicated that the ordinance was premature, but we disagree. We think it should be adopted.



Recommendation #21

Develop more public rest rooms downtown. (City, civic groups, grants)

Status: Currently we have one that fully complies with the DDI recommendation.

Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

This recommendation has been implemented.

GDS Assessment:

The downtown public restrooms are a real success story. This is an important asset that will become more apparent as the volume of visitors increases.



Recommendation #22

Place a visitor information center in the renovated Hotel Marshall. (Marshall Chamber of Commerce)

Status: Delete from the plan as this was accomplished when the CVB's Visitors Center opened in 2012 and meets the intent of this recommendation.

Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

This recommendation has not been undertaken. However, the CVB office at North Washington and Rusk has been set up to function as a visitor information center.

GDS Assessment:

We agree that the MCVB visitor center on Washington Street meets the requirements of this recommendation. We also recommend that the concept of placing a second visitor booth somewhere on Highway 59 be studied, as this is a main artery of traffic for the City. (We do not recommend that it be placed in the Convention Center as the booth needs to be visible from Highway 59.



Recommendation #23

Develop a Signage, Wayfinding and Gateway Plan. (City of Marshall)

Status: The plan was completed

Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

The plan has been developed.

GDS Assessment:

We have not seen the plan, so cannot comment on it. However, see Recommendations # 5 and #6.



Recommendation #24

Develop visitor information kiosks. (City of Marshall, Chamber of Commerce)

Status: This recommendation was never a priority for the BDC/CVB nor did the Chamber or the City find it a priority to implement.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

The outdoor kiosk idea was replaced by information shown on a flat screen TV in one of the front windows of the Weisman building. At this point, only the location at Weisman's is in use.

GDS Assessment:

See Recommendation # 22.



Recommendation #25

Fabricate and install all sign systems required to execute signage, wayfinding, and gateway plan.
(City of Marshall)

Status: Further implementation is subject to funding.

Estimated % complete: 40%

City assessment:

Implementation of the plan has been divided into phases due to funding constraints. The first phase consisting of gateway signs and some roadside wayfinding signs has been completed. Also, banners have been installed in the Highway 59 median between I-20 and the Convention Center and on streetlight posts around the Square and on North Washington.

GDS Assessment:

We have not seen the Wayfinding & Gateway Plan, so cannot comment on it or its implementation. We did note however that the banners on Highway 59 are too small to be effective. Also, see Recommendation #5.



Recommendation # 26

Improve night lighting at Interstate 20 exits and designate the most attractive route to Washington Square in downtown Marshall. (City of Marshall, Harrison County, TXDOT)

Status: Because of meeting the requirements of TXDOT and funding, this is a very difficult task.

Estimated % complete: 10%

City assessment:

Improvement of the night lighting at the I-20 exits has not been undertaken. TXDOT will allow it to be done under their conditions and specifications, but it will have to be funded locally. Regarding the route to Washington Square, it is generally agreed that the best route will be on Grand Avenue to North Washington. A couple of wayfinding signs have been put up along this route, but no strong effort has been made to mark this route.

GDS Assessment:

Yes, this is a difficult task, and will probably take years to accomplish, which is exactly why it should continue to be pursued on a regular basis with TXDOT engineers. Our experience in other destinations is that your goals can be accomplished by bringing new ideas to the table, showing examples of solutions from other communities, and by developing a relationship with the TXDOT.



Recommendation #27

Develop and foster a public arts program based upon the performing arts. (Marshall Arts Council)

Status: Limited work has been done on this item. It still has potential to make an impact in the downtown area.

Estimated % complete: 30%

City assessment:

GDS Assessment:

This is another area in which the Main Street Program can justifiably take the lead.



Recommendation #28

Add Trompe l'oeil to the existing downtown buildings to add interest and support the brand.
(Main Street Program)

Status: It is not practical with existing buildings and owners and the value of the payback for the investment of resources is not clear.

Estimated % complete: 0% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

No Tromp l'oeil murals have been undertaken. The MADI sculpture wall at the northeast corner of East Houston and Lafayette is a significant effort to bring artwork into the downtown area. The artworks shown on the two vinyls attached to the north side of the Business Development Center were an effort to bring artwork into the downtown area at an affordable cost.

GDS Assessment:

We disagree that it is impractical to design Trompe l'oeil for existing downtown buildings. The value for payback of the investment is in a more interesting, attractive and welcoming downtown, and ultimately in additional traffic and retail sales. Trompe l'oeil is different from sculpture, murals, and fine art. It essentially is an extension of the architecture of the building and is a low cost way of adding architectural detail to plain facades. Many historical buildings in Europe have used Trompe l'oeil for centuries, so it has a well-founded pedigree. We noticed that many of the facades in the Washington Square district are plain looking and in need of improvements. This is a reasonable solution.



Recommendation #29

The Wonderland of Lights should be re-configured into a year-round display of white lights downtown. (Marshall Festivals and downtown property owners)

Status: No work was taken on this recommendation and it would be up to the community to move forward with. It still has possibilities.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

The CVB has focused major effort and funding to improve and expand the Wonderland of Lights, especially in the past two years. The CVB plans to continue this effort.

GDS Assessment:

We believe that it was a mistake for the MCVB to take on Wonderland of Lights Festival, to directly operate and fund it. The vast majority of CVB's do not directly do these kinds of events because it distracts from a more annualized program, uses a prodigious amount of staff time, and has uncertain financial consequences. It is particularly a misdirection for Marshall's new CVB that was recommended by DDI's Plan to develop new events for a brand that would be relevant year round. For this reason, we think that Recommendation #29 – reconfigure into a year round display of white lights downtown, is still a good idea. It will help bring Washington Square and Washington Street to life. With today's LED lighting, the operating costs would be low. A central design for the lighting needs to be developed.



Recommendation #30

Train city staff, contractors, building owners, design professionals, and others about the parameters of International Existing Building Codes, with regard to refurbishing buildings in downtown Marshall. (City of Marshall)

Status: It appears that this is left to the City's building codes department but no specifics have been made public.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

Specific training has not been held. Use of the Existing Building Code has been emphasized with the City's inspectors.

GDS Assessment:

It is our understanding that some private developers have brought the IEBC directives to the attention of the City's building inspectors and that it has helped in the refurbishment of existing buildings. Formal training is still a good idea.



Recommendation #31

Redevelop all marketing materials from the ground up. (CVB) Status: The CVB had done this.
Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

This recommendation has been implemented by the CVB.

GDS Assessment:

Marketing materials by the Bureau reflect the brand logo and are comprehensive in covering Marshall's events and attractions.



Recommendation #32

Redesign the official Website for the City of Marshall and design a new one for the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau. (Marshall CVB)

Status: A new website was completed for the CVB. The City has also implemented a new website. However, the websites do not incorporate similar design which would indicate that the City did not desire to comply with this recommendation.

Estimated % complete: 50% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

This recommendation has been implemented by the CVB.

GDS Assessment:

As of our review, the official City of Marshall Website contains a masthead with partial representation of the MCVB brand logo. The MCVB website masthead does not feature the brand or brand logo but features the Wonderland of Lights Festival. The Chamber of Commerce website features neither. This situation is indicative of the lack of consensus among leading stakeholder groups as to the Marshall brand.



Recommendation #33

Use Internet keyword marketing. (CVB, City of Marshall)

Status: CVB is doing this.

Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

Status not known.

GDS Assessment:

We did not explore the MCVB's use of keyword marketing.



Recommendation #34
Develop an Activities Guide. (CVB)

Status: There is no longer a need to develop a printed activities guide with the calendar of events on the CVB's website.

Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

This recommendation has been implemented by the CVB.

GDS Assessment:

No assessment.



Recommendation #35

Create an online marketing kit for facilities and events. (CVB)

Status: This is an ongoing development of internet marketing and continues to be important. However, instead of just a marketing kit, items like virtual tours should be included in the CVB marketing plan.

Estimated % complete: 75%

City assessment:

Status not known.

GDS Assessment:

We looked at the MCVB website and found no schematics, diagrams, statistical data or photos of available meeting and event space. This type of information for the convention center, visual arts center, Telegraph Park, hotels or other venues is not shown. The City website with the Convention Center information is linked from the MCVB site and does show this type of information for that facility. This is confusing to the potential meeting or event planner, since the MCVB site says they are available to help with meeting needs, will help book Convention Center space, yet a link throws the person over to the Convention Center website for all the details. There needs to be better coordination between the CVB and the Convention Center and a seamless process for the event planner.



Recommendation #36

Develop an online press kit and photo library. (CVB)

Status: As internet marketing changes, additional components of this program need to be included in the CVB's annual marketing plan.

Estimated % complete: 50%

City assessment:

Status not known.

GDS Assessment:

As of our review of the MCVB website, there does not appear to be an online press kit and photo library.



Recommendation # 37

Develop an e-marketing program.

Status: Is an ongoing program of the CVB. Estimated % complete: 100% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

The CVB has undertaken a concerted effort to implement this recommendation on an ongoing basis. The CVB makes regular use of email communication with persons on their email list. The CVB also utilizes Facebook and Twitter to communicate its messages.

GDS Assessment:

The MCVB appears to be engaged in a regular e-marketing program. We did not investigate the nature of their database or distribution of messages



Recommendation # 38

Create a framed poster to promote and reinforce the brand. (Marshall Chamber of Commerce)

Status: This is not a practical tool for today's marketing with little return for any resources that would be used to produce the poster.

Estimated % complete: 0% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

This recommendation has not been implemented.

GDS Assessment:

We feel this recommendation should be set aside until the Entertainment Brand has developed some success and is well known in Marshall's primary markets.



Recommendation #39

Develop a strong public relations program. (CVB)

Status: This is program that is included in the CVB's annual plan before should further the implementation plan before closing the recommendation to be certain that continues to be a priority for the CVB.

Estimated % complete: 50%

City assessment:

This recommendation has been implemented by the CVB.

GDS Assessment:

There will be limitations on how strong a public relations plan can be implemented until more events and activities are developed as well as further physical improvements made in the downtown.



Recommendation #40

Create billboards for Interstate-20 (CVB)

Status: While the CVB has had at least one billboard on I-20 in the past, it has become a funding problem to conduct a significant billboard program. Additionally, some of the primary hoteliers are not certain that a billboard campaign will actually be worth the investment. Additional consideration and research should be taken before any billboard campaign would be conducted. .

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

This recommendation has been implemented by the CVB. In light of the current decline in Hotel Occupancy Tax funds available to the CVB, the CVB has chosen to reduce the number of billboards it leases.

GDS Assessment:

Again the success of a recommendation for promotion is contingent on the adequate development of product – in this case, consistently available entertainment and activities in the downtown corridor. Until more product is developed, the billboard program should be set aside.



Recommendation #41

A separate tourism organization (Convention and Visitors Bureau) should be created to regulate the

use of the brand, develop product in support of the brand, and market the brand. (City)

Status: Organization is in place.

Estimated % complete: 100% CLOSE ITEM

City assessment:

This organization was created in the fall of 2007 shortly after the plan was adopted.

GDS Assessment:

The MCVB from the beginning, has not been focused on the central and critical task of programming and attracting viable, new entertainment events that would create new months of entertainment lures for overnight guests from Marshall's primary markets.

Organizationally, the City is too closely tied to the Bureau. The City provides HOT funds and general funds to the Bureau, then collects back revenues to pay CVB salaries and provides them City-based benefits. Annual contracts with the Bureau are often delayed, and create planning problems. The CVB is required to audit itself using a cash basis instead of a less distorted and more sensible accrual basis. Lengthy monthly status reports are required by the City from the Bureau on activities. On occasion, the City has had to step in and pay deficits of the Bureau. All of these factors have created an unhealthy tethering and dependency of the Bureau on the City. And in some respects it puts the City in jeopardy of covering the Bureau's financial problems. Both the City and the Bureau would be better served if the relationship were strictly contractual for services provided.

The City has at its disposal, HOT funds dedicated to the development of the visitor industry for Marshall. Many of these funds are used to fund organizations and activities that are of a community nature and have little or no impact on luring and bringing visitors to Marshall. This has resulted in an underfunding of the Bureau for its primary task of developing a new Entertainment Arts Brand.

The Bureau has been misdirected from the DDI Plan from the beginning. Instead of focusing on getting the Memorial Hall Auditorium built, and theatre productions attracted to fill its calendar, the Bureau took on the already existing Wonderland of Lights Festival, actually planning and producing the annual event. This has taken up substantial time of the Bureau staff, used up substantial MCVB funds, and put the Bureau in the role of an event producer, with its inherent financial risks.

The Bureau borrows money from the City, takes out bank loans, and has difficulty in making payments in a timely manner.

In other areas, the Bureau has promoted itself as a traditional CVB, offering all types of meetings and convention services. Yet they attract and book almost no events in the Convention Center, generate no hotel packages, and have no measurement tools to determine the value of meetings held. In our opinion, the Bureau promotes what it has instead of attracting the programming it needs.



Recommendation #42

Update the Action Plan every three years. (Brand Development Committee)

Status: A review by the City/CVB has not been done since the creation of the plan. This review, by the CVB's Marketing Advisory Committee, is the first attempt at the process. Unless the plan is reviewed by the City staff/the community, then there is not a need to attempt to implement the plan.

Estimated % complete: 5% once this review is passed on to the City

City assessment:

Status not known.

GDS Assessment:

The Bureau states that "unless the Plan is reviewed by the City staff/the community, then there is not a need to attempt to implement the plan." This statement shows a resignation on the part of the Bureau. The Bureau leadership (the private sector) should be the leading advocates and champions of the brand and create confidence and consensus within the community that supports its development. This clearly has not happened.



Recommendation #43

Use an outside facilitator to keep the brand on track. (Brand Development Committee)

Status: No attempt to bring in a facilitator as been done since the plan was completed.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment: Recommendation #44

Status not known.

GDS Assessment:

No assessment.



Recommendation #44

Hire professional brand building services. This would be an agency that specializes in environmental graphics, print and web graphics, identity design, etc. (CVB/Brand Development Committee)

Status: A brand manager was hired to develop the basic program.

Estimated % complete: 75%

City assessment:

This recommendation has been implemented by the CVB.

GDS Assessment:

We know very little about the original brand manager, however the results are clear. The Entertainment Brand effort got off on the wrong foot, and needs to be refocused.



Recommendation #45

Contract for a recruitment specialist to bring new businesses downtown. (City of Marshall)

Status: The Brand Development Committee hired a retail recruiter early in the plan implementation stage. After spending \$80,000 and getting no businesses or deliverables the person was released. It is unrealistic to spend any more money on the recommendation.

Estimated % complete: 0% ITEM CLOSED

City assessment:

This recommendation is related to #18. As noted in #18, the CVB contracted with a retail recruiter in late 2007 or early 2008 to begin the effort to implement this recommendation. The downturn in the economy that became significant and accelerated in the fall of 2008 severely impacted this effort. The CVB chose to discontinue the contract with the retail recruiter in late 2008 or early 2009 due to the extremely limited chances of results given the condition of the economy. No consideration has been given to restarting this effort due to the ongoing and persistent conditions in the economy.

GDS Assessment:

See Recommendation #18.



Recommendation #46

A Brand Development Committee should foster community-wide involvement in the branding program. (The City of Marshall)

Status: While the CVB has attempted to incorporate this information about the brand and the process to the community during the past year but, just as the branding the community will take time, this process will also take time. For the plan to be successful, City Commission and staff must be focused on this recommendation as well

Estimated % complete 5%

City assessment:

This recommendation was implemented in the fall of 2007. The Brand Development functioned as the initial version of the Convention and Visitor Bureau and evolved into the Convention and Visitor Bureau approximately three years later.

GDS Assessment:

We agree that for the plan to be successful the City Commission and City staff must be on board and advocates for the Brand. Their leadership in the community is needed for the general public to accept the brand direction. The fact that the CVB has been off point of the brand as recommended by DDI may be a reason that the City never quite fully got on board.



Recommendation #47

The Branding Development Committee and the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau should forge a strong cooperative relationship with the East Texas Baptist University Fine Arts Program and the Wiley College Hospitality and Tourism Administration Program, Music Program, and Theater Program. (Marshall Development Committee/CVB)

Status: Limited work has been completed to date. This should be incorporate in the CVB's annual marketing plan.

Estimated % complete: 10%

City assessment:

Some effort has been directed at implementing this recommendation.

GDS Assessment:

The purpose of this recommendation did not have to do with marketing, but rather with developing entertainment at the University and College that could be performed at one or more of the downtown venues, thus providing content that is so critical to the brand.



Recommendation #48

Marshall Festivals, Inc. should refocus toward recruitment of street performers and small performing arts groups into the downtown. (Marshall Festivals)

Status: MFI gone. Other entities have moved forward with some aspects of this recommendation and should be reevaluated further as to determine if the recommendation is still valid.

Estimated % complete: 0%

City assessment:

The responsibility for implementation of this recommendation was placed with Marshall Festivals, Inc. Marshall Festivals ceased to function two to three years ago. Marshall Festivals never embraced this recommendation while it was still functioning. The City's Main Street program, the CVB, and the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie program have tried

to fill this void. The efforts have been focused primarily on bands and performers in more structured concerts in the Washington Square district.

GDS Assessment:

The Bureau is to be commended for taking the anchor Jazz & Classics event and extending it to a week of music entitled "Marshall Music Festival." This is the type of product development that is needed, and rises to the standards of a lure instead of a diversion. If future Boogie Woogie demonstration concerts are developed, these too may have the capacity to lure new visitors from primary markets.



Recommendation #49

Create a Sign Review for the Washington Square district. (City Commission)

Status: Marshall Main Street has had a committee to take this responsibility but that position should be made more predominate within the city

Estimated % complete: 85%

City assessment:

This recommendation has not been implemented.

GDS Assessment:

This recommendation remains valid, and will become more so if and when new, additional visitor-oriented retail shops are located in the Washington District. This recommendation should be combined with Recommendation # 18.



Recommendation #50

Adopt this plan in its entirety. (The entire community and the City Commission by majority vote)

Status: Completed.

Estimated % complete: 100% CLOSE ITEM

City assessment:

The Tourism Plan was adopted in its entirety in August, 2007.

GDS Assessment:

The DDI Plan may have been formally adopted, but there is a lack of consensus and collaboration on the part of stakeholders, organizations and the City in the implementation of the plan. The Bureau has focused on Wonderland of Lights, the City has independently sponsored the development of Boogie Woogie music development, the Convention Center and Main Street program and the Chamber of Commerce have little in the way of a relationship with the Bureau. Unless a unified vision that is shared by all of these parties is achieved, no branding direction will succeed in Marshall.



Recommendation #51

Hold an election to create a downtown restaurant district that allows the sale of liquor by-the-drink. (City of Marshall/Downtown Development Committee)

Status: To be addressed by interested individuals/business owners and is not a function of the City, CVB, or Chamber to lead this effort.

Estimated % complete: 0% CLOSE ITEM

City assessment:

This action has not been undertaken.

GDS Assessment:

The idea that the City, CVB or Chamber should not take the initiative on creating a downtown restaurant district highlights the tentative support there is for the brand development and the lack of cooperation and advocacy that exists among important stakeholder organizations in Marshall.



Recommendation #52

Re-allocate Hotel Occupancy Tax funds and continue using funds for product development initiatives. (City of Marshall/Downtown Development Corporation)

Status: The City has been reallocating HOT funds for other needs or objectives and will have to determine if that is the direction to continue with or not.

Estimated %: complete: 0%

City assessment:

Hotel Occupancy Tax funds were re-allocated beginning with the City's 2009 fiscal year in January, 2009 generally in compliance with the recommendations contained in the budget on page 147 of the Tourism Plan.

GDS Assessment:

We recall that when the DDI Tourism Plan was written, specific amounts of HOT funds were allocated to the Marshall Texas & Pacific Railway Museum, the County Historical Museum, the Michelson Museum of Art, Marshall Festivals, Inc. and the Regional Arts Council. It is the case these the amounts for these organizations in the DDI budget are approximately what the City is giving to them today. The DDI budget was based on a forecasted steady revenue stream from hotel occupancy taxes. The revenue stream has declined. It was also anticipated that Convention Center debt service from HOT funds would be \$20,000 annually. It is in fact \$114,000. And it was anticipated that \$200,000 per year would go toward new building projects including the Auditorium. Currently HOT funds used toward Auditorium bonds are about \$170,000. In view of these factors, consideration should be given to reducing or omitting HOT funds for organizations and attractions that are at best marginally beneficial to brand development because they are passive attractions. These would include the Marshall Texas & Pacific Railway Museum, the County Historical Museum, and the Michelson Museum of Art. The brand development should have priority use of these funds.

Other budget items should be reconsidered as well, but this is outside the scope of this project.



Recommendation #53

Owners of downtown properties need to initially reduce rents to attract retail operations needed for a vibrant downtown. (Downtown property owners, retail businessmen and investors.)

Status: Few interested downtown owners wanting to do this.

Estimated % complete: unknown CLOSE ITEM

City assessment:

No action has been taken to encourage implementation of this recommendation.

GDS Assessment:

We are not surprised that few (who are the few?) downtown property owners are interested in doing this. It is the job of the downtown recruiter to make the economic case for this. As we have previously recommended, this is a legitimate role for the Main Street Program.

(bureau note)

NOTE: In an overview of these recommendations, one continual issue with the success or failure of these recommendations appears to be a result of two concerns. (1) no single entity has take the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the plan and (2) no regular review by the community, and in particular by the named organizations in this document, have discussed the status of these recommendations.

GDS agrees that there is confusion among Marshall stakeholders as to individual responsibility for each of the recommendations in the DDI Tourism Plan, and that this is primarily due to a ill-defined relationships between the City and the MCVB (the less than arms length contractual relationship), the independent but critical role of the Main Street manager, and the introduction of an independent brand direction for Boogie Woogie by the City.



GDS Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The essential goal of the DDI Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan (The DDI Tourism Plan) is far from being achieved, and under current conditions, is unachievable. These conditions have been discussed in the *Summary of Findings Document* as well as the *GDS Review of DDI Tourism Plan Recommendations*. To recap the current conditions:

- There is no community-wide consensus on the adoption of the Entertainment Arts brand concept.
- There are stakeholders who actively want to change the brand to the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie.
- Available tourism funding is distributed among a wide variety of uses that do not support the brand's development as well as some that do support it. Assuming the extremely generous amount of spending fifty dollars to bring one visitor for one night, the HOT funds should have yielded 14,000 visitor nights annually from people who came for the brand. Nothing close to that has been achieved.
- Key city organizations and individuals (including the City Council, the City Manager, the Main Street Manager, the Marshall CVB Board and Executive Director, the Convention Center staff, as well as certain city contractors, key downtown property owners, and downtown proprietors have such differing opinions on how to proceed with the branding initiative that their relationships prevent a unified path toward brand development.
- A six year history of efforts to attract, subsidize, produce or otherwise generate entertainment in downtown Marshall (including Boogie Woogie events) that is capable of attracting overnight visitors from Marshall's stated primary markets (Dallas, Houston, etc.) has been very poor. Achieving this is the key economic reason for the brand development.

It is unknown whether Marshall can bring entertainment to downtown powerful enough to lure visitors from Dallas, Houston, and other primary markets. Certainly these events will have to pay for themselves, and turn a profit for the artists and producers. Can they? Do the efforts of the past six years indicate that the brand concept is unachievable? Or is it simply the case that the current conditions have prevented success and the right skills and effort have not been put forward?

The City Commission needs to make a decision about pursuing the Entertainment Arts brand. Is it worthwhile to proceed with this brand? There are specific actions that GDS recommends that the City adopt.

Recommendations

Recommendation A. "HOT Funds"

The City should separate the concepts of community services and economic development. Presently these are tied together.

For example, the Convention Center acts primarily as a community center. The vast majority of meetings and events there are strictly local in nature. The number of events that generate new dollars from primary market visitors can be counted on two hands. Yet the bond debt is being paid out of HOT funds, which should be dedicated to tourism as an economic development generator.



The Railway Museum, the Harrison County Historical Museum and the Michelson Museum of Art are passive, diversionary attractions and draw very few true visitors. They are subsidized by HOT funds. Another example is the Bureau's former role in Second Saturdays. Car shows and related entertainment are a local event. This is something visitors can get closer to home.

A fourth example is Boogie Woogie Wednesdays. They get mostly a local crowd. Attracting these Wednesday artists is subsidized by HOT funds. Pay for these local activities out of general funds.

Use HOT funds for the development and promotion of genuine tourism activities that bring new money into the community. These would go toward the MCVB, Main Street Program (proposed tasks), debt on the Auditorium remodel, and the Marshall Regional Arts Council.

Recommendation B. "MCVB Organization"

Focus the Marshall Convention & Visitors Bureau on the acquisition of entertainment that attracts primary market visitors. Unless you decided to abandon the Entertainment Arts Brand altogether, refocus the Bureau's activities toward this essential goal. This may require skill sets that are not currently at the Bureau.

- Plan a program of the events and acts that will use the Memorial Hall Auditorium now, before construction. Build a calendar that lures visitors for one or more overnight stays in order to attend different shows on consecutive days. Make sure that the operating costs of the Auditorium will be covered. Negotiate with production companies, and refrain from Bureau operated events. Use Bureau funds as performance based incentives, not as underwriting. Create a month of activities in a season that balances out December's Wonderland of Lights. If you can develop a confident program of events, then proceed with construction of the Auditorium.
- Program events for the Visual Arts Center and Telegraph Park as well.
- Create a greater distinction between the City and the Bureau so the City is not liable for the Bureau's debts. Streamline Bureau reporting with a focus on results, not activities. Let the Bureau pay its own salaries. Finalize contracts one month prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. Consider having the Bureau operate two specific areas:
 - 1) Make the Bureau responsible for spearheading all entertainment development initiatives. Keep the Bureau focused on bringing self-sustaining events to Marshall and the promotion of existing events (via website, collateral materials, publicity). As a City, don't give outside contracts for similar types of activities (e.g. Boogie Woogie) If you lack confidence in the Bureau's directions or skills, have the Bureau correct it in-house.
 - 2) Consider replacing current Convention Center personnel and functions by giving the Bureau responsibility for booking and managing the Center. Determine if it will result in fewer operating losses. Since the Bureau's main directive will be to spearhead entertainment development initiatives, it will be in the best position to book events into the Center.

Recommendation C. "Wonderland of Lights Festival"

Remove Wonderland of Lights from the Bureau. Offer it to another community-based organization. (if no one will take it on, that is probably a good indication that it has run its current life cycle). WOL is a part of the Entertainment Arts brand but it should not be the central feature of the Bureau's activities, as it currently is. WOL may become more economically viable as a smaller, more focused, or up-scaled event. We recommend that HOT funds dedicated to WOL be limited to not more than \$100,000 annually. The City should continue to



make available to any new producer of WOL, the lights, inflatables and other assets the City or Bureau possesses.

Recommendation D. “Boogie Woogie”

Boogie Woogie music has a place in the mix of music and entertainment for the brand, just as does rock, jazz, the blues, soul, classical, folk, and other musical forms. It is our belief that Boogie Woogie music is a niche market, and has limitations that keep it from replacing the Entertainment Arts brand. It has limited appeal as evidenced by the visitor numbers who have attended concerts. There are simply not enough people that can be lured to Marshall for Boogie Woogie music on a consistent basis, as would be required if it were the brand. Attendance can be improved through more awareness and education, but we are still of the opinion that as a core brand it will not generate the numbers of enthusiasts needed to make it economically viable as Marshall’s brand.

There are two aspects of Boogie Woogie that should be pursued. First, programming should be developed into a song, dance and narrative show that would feature the history of Boogie Woogie music, its development, demonstrations of its links to other forms of American music, and with audience participation. But it has to be profitable for the producers, not subsidized by the City. Secondly, the story of Boogie Woogie music should be told within the context and the broader perspective of local African-American history, so that African-American ownership of this historical legacy can be reinforced.

Recommendation E. “Washington District”

Whether the City Council decides to pursue the Entertainment Arts brand or not, there are still options for improving the economic well-being of the downtown. Make the Washington Square District, and specifically North Washington Avenue, a more attractive, animated place for locals to hang out.

It makes economic sense to continue to improve the experience of downtown. Locals will increase their downtown shopping and dining activities if the place is made more attractive and if new shops and restaurants are added.

- Update the Main Street Program and make it responsible for additional tasks. This may require new skill sets at the Main Street Program.
 - Work with downtown building owners to improve building facades, particularly retail storefronts, and improve curb appeal. Develop consensus on a color palette of exterior paint, use Trompe l’oeil to add features to the buildings, plant trees and install flowers seasonally.
 - Create year-round lighting of North Washington Avenue with white LED lights that outline the buildings.
 - Work with retail proprietors to improve store window merchandising.
 - Put Main Street in charge of economic restructuring North Washington Avenue through the recruitment of additional retail and dining establishments that are up scale and appeal to both locals and visitors. This would include negotiating with building owners for stepped and structured rental packages that will attract new tenants.
 - HOT funds can be applied to these tasks.
- Add better Washington District signage and gateways to the District.



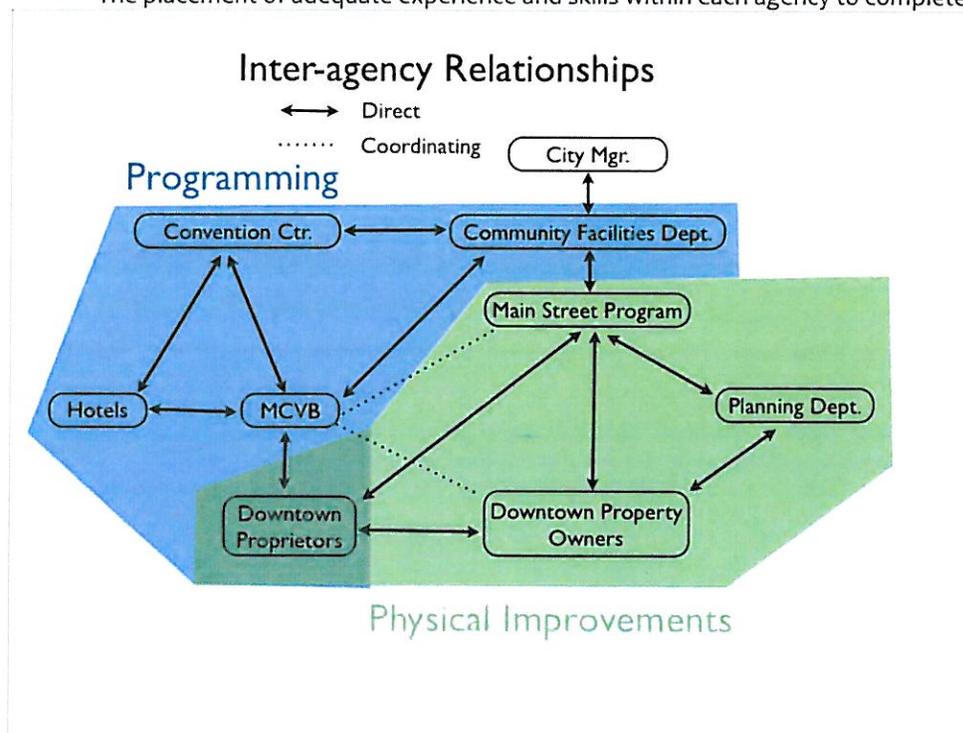
Recommendation F. "Inter-agency Cooperation"

The key agencies and groups participating in Marshall's brand development are:

- City Commission Members
- City Manager's Office
- Community Facilities Department
 - Convention Center, Visual Arts Center, Memorial Hall, Arena, Main Street Program
- Main Street Program
 - (proposed) downtown lighting, facades, etc.
 - (proposed) new retail recruitment
- Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Event Development for:
 - Memorial City Hall Auditorium, Visual Arts Center, Telegraph Park, Convention Center
 - (proposed) Convention Center management
 - Marketing Marshall
- Downtown property owners
- Downtown retail proprietors
- Marshall Hotels

The relationships between participating agencies depend upon their roles in programming entertainment arts events for the downtown, or in improving the physical environment of the downtown. The following chart shows direct and coordinating relationships among the various agencies and groups. Important steps in achieving cooperation among the groups include:

- Agreement on the direction of the brand development and on downtown improvements.
- Agreement on which agency/group has a lead role in any given task, and which agencies will provide support.
- Agreement on the distribution of HOT funds for each task.
- The placement of adequate experience and skills within each agency to complete the tasks.



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